



National Nuclear Security Administration
U.S. Department of Energy

NEWS

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March 14, 2003

Y-12 TO RESUME WET CHEMISTRY OPERATIONS

*Authorization Marks Final Y-12 Operation Resumed
from September 1994 Stand-down*

OAK RIDGE, Tenn.--The National Nuclear Security Administration has authorized BWXT Y-12 to resume operations of the wet chemistry section of Enriched Uranium Operations at the Y-12 National Security Complex.

Wet chemistry operations at Y-12 involve the recovery and purification of enriched uranium. These operations will begin early next week and will be fully operational over the next several months.

Programs at the Y-12 National Security Complex include the remanufacture of nuclear weapons components, dismantlement and storage of nuclear weapons components from the national arsenal, serving as the nation's safe and secure storehouse of special nuclear materials, reducing the global threat from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and providing the U.S. Navy with fuel for nuclear propulsion.

The authorization is the last in a series of milestones that are part of Y-12's phased plan to fully restart manufacturing operations that were suspended as a part of the September 1994 stand-down. Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) received approval from the Y-12 Site Office of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to resume fissile material handling and storage in April 2000 and authorization was given in May 2001 to restart reduction and pour-up operations.

"None of the phases of restart work have been easy," said EUO Manager Jimmy Stone. "But the complexity of this piece required that we take the time to do it right."

Bill Brumley, Manager of the NNSA's Y-12 Site Office, applauded the team effort of both BWXT Y-12, and the Y-12 Site Office. "I think our accomplishments

reflect the desire that everyone here has to resume full-scale operations at Y-12," he said.

Dennis Ruddy, President and General Manager of BWXT Y-12, noted that the wet chemistry resumption is "good for Y-12, it's good for East Tennessee, and it's good for national security." The resumption of wet chemistry operations has required Y-12 to begin hiring additional chemical operators to carry out the work.

"It has taken quite a few years, a lot of manpower and a lot of extra effort from everyone to be able to achieve this success," said EUO Restart Director Robbie Cordani. "We look forward to fully resuming all phases of operations and maintaining safe, secure operations."

NNSA, a separately managed agency within the U.S. Department of Energy, is responsible for the operation of the nation's nuclear weapons complex. BWXT Y-12 operates the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, facility for NNSA.

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